

**2009
NFLRC SUMMER INSTITUTE
FOR NON-NATIVE
TEACHERS OF CHINESE**

EVALUATION REPORT

June 22–July 3, 2009

HeeJin Kim & Ritsuko Iyoda

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation report presents the results of an evaluation project performed on one of the 2009 National Foreign Language Resource Center Summer Institutes (2009 SI). The program under evaluation was a two-week, web-based intensive language course for non-native teachers of Chinese, offered from June 22 to July 3, 2009. The 2009 SI was co-sponsored by the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) and the National Resource Center - East Asia (NRC-EA) at the University of Hawai'i. A total of 18 non-native teachers of Chinese currently in service teaching the language at the K–16 level were the participants of the program. The purpose of the 2009 SI evaluation project was to assist the instructor in finalizing curriculum development for the 2009 SI, and to conduct a mid-term and a follow-up evaluation. The 2009 SI evaluation started in February 2009 with analysis of the applicants' applications, and finished following the institute with the conducting and analyzing of a final online survey. The 2009 SI evaluation process comprised three stages: before, during, and after the 2009 SI, and will be reported on accordingly.

Findings

Before the 2009 SI

The purpose of the before-2009 SI evaluation was to finalize the curriculum. To assist the instructor in finalizing the curriculum, the application forms completed by the participants and two written tasks in Chinese were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Also, the evaluation report for the 2001 Summer Institute (2001 SI), which was also a Web-based language skills development workshop for non-native teachers of Chinese, was refereed by the evaluators to gather information about participants' needs. From analysis of the applications, we found discrepancies between the instructor's initial placement and

participants' self-rated proficiencies, as well as mixed understanding among the participants regarding the objectives of the SI. Also, suggestions from the previous participants about moderating the intensive pace and reducing the amount of assignments were summarized and reported to the instructors. By the end of April, the instructor and the evaluators were able to complete curricula for two groups of participants at different levels and to finalize participants' placement in the groups. The number of chapters to be covered was reduced from five to four based on the previous participants' suggestions. Also, evaluators and the instructor agreed to send out an invitation to participants for an optional level change on the second day of instruction.

During the 2009 SI

The mid-term formative evaluation was conducted by administering an on-line survey questionnaire on the fifth day of the 2009 SI (June 25, Saturday). The survey results showed high participant satisfaction with the two instructors, instructors' feedback to participants, and the textbook. However, the participants were challenged by the intensive pace of the SI, the amount of assignments, inconsistency between the instructor and the textbook regarding certain language points, and some of the complexities of website use and navigation. Because of the relatively short timeframe of the SI, radical changes were not able to be made, but instructors posted a memorandum in response to the survey results acknowledging participants' feedback and outlining which suggestions would be possible to implement in the short term, and which would have to be held for later.

After the 2009 SI

The results of the follow-up summative evaluation survey were similar to those of the mid-term survey. The participants were satisfied with the instructors, contents, feedback, and materials. Many of the participants actually mentioned that they became more confident in

Chinese writing and teaching Chinese. However, they were still challenged by the intensive pace, the amount of assignments, and the inconsistency between certain aspects of instructors' feedback and the content of the textbook. Some suggestions for future SIs were made, such as promoting SI earlier with more clear notification, offering a tutorial session to familiarize participants with web site navigation before the start of the SI, providing additional guidance in advance of activities/assignments, and offering web-based teacher development opportunities more often. Those findings will be reflected in future SI planning.

FULL REPORT

Brief Description of the 2009 SI

Overview

The 2009 NFLRC Summer Institute for Non-Native Teachers of Chinese (2009 SI) is a two-week online program focusing on the development and maintenance of writing skills for non-native-speaking teachers of the Chinese language at the K-16 level, and it was delivered entirely online from June 22 to July 3, 2009. The 2009 SI was co-sponsored by the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) and the National Resource Center-East Asia (NRC-EA) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, with funding under Title VI from the US Department of Education. The NFLRC Summer Institute for non-native teachers of Chinese course was previously offered twice, in 2001 and 2002.

In the 2009 SI, participants completed four thematic units based on authentic materials for an equivalent of thirty contact hours of instruction. Aside from a daily time commitment of approximately four hours of on- and off-line computer work, the 2009 SI also featured an interactive component. The participants formed an online learning community, where the participants held discussions and shared compositions. This virtual classroom is to

remain open for one year beyond the intensive two-week workshop, so that participants are able to return and explore the course materials further. Stakeholders of the 2009 SI include NFLRC; NRC-EA; one NFLRC staff member who worked as a curriculum designer, program administrator, web-designer, instructor, and internal evaluator; one additional native-speaking Chinese instructor; and participants.

Goals and Objectives

The 2009 SI is specifically aimed at maintaining and developing Chinese writing skills of non-native teachers of Chinese. The Chinese language is not only in great demand, but also one of seven languages critical to US national security (personal communication with the director of NFLRC on February 12, 2009). SI focuses on the development and/or maintenance of communicative language skills at the advanced level of non-native Chinese language teachers (K-16), with strong emphasis on written communication meeting high standards of literacy. To serve its objectives, a textbook was selected which dealt with different types of genres ranging from writing letters to describing people's emotional disposition and moral attributes. The textbook was purchased using SI budget funds and was distributed to the participants free of charge.

The format of the 2009 Chinese SI web site

Access to the 2009 SI web site was limited to the instructors and the participants, and it consisted of four features: the Café, a Welcome unit, the content units, and other miscellaneous elements. The Café is a virtual meeting place where participants can share materials and links, socialize, vent and so on. The Welcome unit consists of an introduction to the Chinese SI, the syllabus, a page with technical guidance on how to handle Chinese language on the computer, and a place for self-introduction called Getting 2 know U. Within two days of the start of the program, participation was already very active. In the content

units, each of two groups of learners (a mid group and an advanced group, placed during the workshop admissions process) was following two different curriculums (four units for each group). Each unit dealt with one topic; participants submitted their assignments in online forums organized around tasks in the textbook, and shared their written responses to the tasks (for example, a letter of application for a job) with other participants. The two instructors provided comments and feedback.

Participants in the 2009 SI

The 2009 SI targeted non-native teachers of Chinese, including heritage speakers of Chinese, whose professional qualifications would be boosted by additional training in written expression. Potential participants applied to the 2009 SI by completing a web-based application form developed by the instructor (see Appendix A). Based on the participants' self-rating of their proficiency, which ranged from ACTFL Novice through Advanced, the instructor decided to create two tracks for the 2009 SI, one for the advanced-level participants (Advanced Group), and the other for the mid-level participants (Mid Group). A total of 20 applicants were admitted to the 2009 SI, though two of them later dropped out of the program.

Primary Intended Users, Intended Uses, and Evaluation Questions

Primary Intended Users

The primary intended users (PIUs) of the present evaluation are the NFLRC and the NRC-EA, one NFLRC staff member who worked as a curriculum designer, program administrator, web-designer, instructor, and internal evaluator (hereafter referred to as the PIU), as well as the additional native-speaking instructor. Two graduate students working for their master's degrees with a specialization in Language Program Evaluation were invited by the NFLRC as external evaluators, and the evaluators were in frequent contact with the PIU,

and communication was generally conducted via the internet as well as in weekly face to face meetings.

Intended Uses and Evaluation Questions of 2009 SI

The 2009 SI program evaluation was started in early February and carried along till July 3, the last day of the SI. It was carried out to (1) conduct a needs analysis for re-designing the previous curriculum used in the 2001 SI, to (2) obtain suggestions from the current participants for future institutes, and to (3) record evaluation results in a form of a report that could be presented to the funders (or to other audiences) when needed. Along these lines, the following were the evaluation questions raised by the PIU:

- What are the goals and objectives of the participants?
- Is the curriculum suitable? (i.e., instructors' initial placement, textbook, topics)
- What kinds of immediate changes can the instructor make for the participants based on their mid-term evaluation?
- What are current participants' views on the SI?
- What are suggestions for future offerings of the SI?

To help the instructor finalize the curriculum, the first question was answered through the admissions process before the 2009 SI (before 2009 SI), and the second question was answered by conducting the mid-term evaluation (during the 2009 SI). Finally, through the follow-up evaluation (after the 2009 SI), the last two questions were answered.

THE 2009 SI EVALUATION

The evaluation was set theoretically within a utilization-focused approach (Patton, 2008). The 2009 SI evaluation started from early February, four months before the SI started. The external evaluators' early involvement, along with persistent collaboration by the

primary intended user, contributed to the generation of actionable and responsive evaluative information. From the beginning of the project, the evaluators and the PIU met weekly, and meeting minutes were kept by the evaluators and shared with the PIU. Improvements to the SI program were accomplished while it was being developed, during implementation, and after implementation. The findings and changes will be presented accordingly - before SI (initial needs analysis), during SI (mid-term survey) and after SI (the final evaluation survey).

Before the 2009 SI

The 2009 SI had a rolling admissions policy, and at the time when the evaluators met with the instructor for the first time on February 6, 16 applicants had been admitted to the 2009 SI on the basis of their professional needs and writing proficiency. According to the PIU, the participants' self-reported Chinese language proficiency and their academic experience showed that there were two distinct participant populations with different language levels and needs; about 40% of the participants seemed to be at an intermediate to advanced level characterized by a higher level of writing proficiency, and the rest seemed to be at novice to intermediate level in need of more basic writing skills. In light of the challenge posed by this diverse population, the PIU and the evaluators met at the outset of the evaluation project to discuss evaluation questions and tools for gathering information. Some questions about the suitability of the curriculum and textbook were raised by the instructor; while the NFLRC Summer Institute for non-native teachers of Chinese course had been offered twice in the past (in the years of 2000 and 2001), the instructor wanted to reform the previous curriculum based on the needs of the current participants. The instructor also wanted to know whether the textbook he selected for the 2009 SI was suitable for the

current participants, and also which units in the textbook should be chosen for the advanced group and which for the mid group. To answer the instructors' questions, it was decided to analyze the applications first.

Initial Assessment

As the first step of the evaluation process, the information in the 16 completed web-based applications (another two application forms were added later) were analyzed by the evaluators in order to gather information about applicants' language needs and situational needs. All the open-ended data in Parts I, II and III were coded, scored, and then analyzed by the evaluators. Part I solicited participants' bio-information, such as their teaching position, levels taught, educational background, and length of any stays in China. In Part II, participants were asked to provide their self-rated proficiency. Each factor was quantified by the evaluators; for example, current Chinese teachers were scored 2, while non-Chinese teachers were scored 1. A Master's degree in Chinese was scored 2, while a Bachelor's degree scored 1. Also, their proficiency was quantified from 1 (novice-low) to 10 (superior), and their confidence in using Chinese characters was scored from 1 (extremely uncomfortable) to 9 (extremely comfortable). Finally, applicants' scores in the two parts were added up. Their individual total scores ranged from 50 to 19. Part III, the statement of purpose, was analyzed qualitatively and was summarized into three categories: participants' language needs, weaknesses, and strengths as non-native Chinese instructors. The instructor and the evaluators analyzed the data individually, and the findings were communicated with each other promptly.

The applicants were rated by the evaluators based on their total scores in Parts I and II, and then the results were compared to the initial ratings done by the instructor. A

discrepancy was found between the evaluators' rating and the initial rating as shown in Appendix B, which led us to a new evaluation question - was the instructor's initial placement accurate? In order to answer this new evaluation question, the instructor and the evaluators needed more information about the participants' Chinese language proficiency level. To make a final placement decision, it was suggested that the PIU request writing samples from the participants.

Also, the analysis of the participants' statements of purpose revealed participants' mixed understanding of the instructional objectives of the 2009 SI. Some excerpts from the statements of purpose follow:

"I am interested in learning the pedagogy of teaching Chinese. I am also interested in learning ways to teach Kanji writing. Eager to learn how to use differentiation techniques"

"I am sure if accepted to your program, I could gain more confidence to design curriculum, with the hopes of collaborating with an educator on a project"

These responses slightly concerned the PIU and the evaluators because the website for the 2009 SI clearly stated that the focus of the 2009 SI was reading & writing at the advanced level, and that emphasis would be placed on written communication meeting high standards of literacy. Although there was some lack of clarity as shown above, the vast majority of responses indicated that the primary focus of the participants was to improve their confidence in teaching advance level by improving their writing skills and expanding vocabulary.

Based on the results above, it was suggested by the evaluators to send an e-mail to the participants to clarify the objectives of the 2009 SI, and also to request the participants to return writing samples based on two writing tasks which could help the PIU to make final placement decisions. In addition, textbook units to be used for the Advanced Group and Mid Group respectively were proposed to the participants in the e-mail for their input. The e-mail was drafted by the PIU, and then reviewed by the evaluators for feedback. The final version

was sent to the participants on February 25, and 16 out of 18 participants responded to the e-mail. Since neither one of the evaluators speaks Mandarin Chinese, the PIU analyzed the participants' responses to the two writing tasks, and communicated his findings to the evaluators. After analysis of the writing samples, the PIU made final placement decisions (see Table 1). A total of five participants were placed at a level different from their initial placement. Since the placement of two of the participants turned out to be different from either the initial placement of the evaluators or that of the PIU, we all agreed on the importance of requesting this type of writing tasks for making accurate placement decisions.

Evaluation Report for the 2001 NFLRC Summer Institute

A web-based workshop for advanced reading, writing, development and maintenance for non-native teachers of Chinese was offered by the NFLRC on July 2–13, 2001, and taught by the same instructor. The 2001 SI was evaluated by the instructor, and the evaluation findings were summarized and reported in the form of an evaluation report. Since due to the length of time since the 2001 SI it was not reasonable to contact previous participants, the PIU and the evaluators decided to analyze the 2001 SI evaluation report. The focus of the document analysis was to gather information about previous participants' impressions of the 2001 SI. The two evaluators read the whole 2001 SI report, and the participants' opinions in the report were gathered and synthesized.

According to the evaluation report, the previous participants reacted very positively to the 2001 SI, and they expressed that they would be interested in participating in more workshops in the future. However, there were some challenges that both the previous participants and the instructor faced: they were overwhelmed with the intensive pace, little time, and the inconsistency between the previous participants' language level and the given

materials. For these reasons, it was recommended by the 2001 SI instructor that “subsequent offerings of the workshop be extended in time, but not necessarily expanded in content” (Fleming, 2001).

Use of the Findings

The analysis of the application forms, the previous evaluation report, and the participants’ responses to the e-mail request gave us amply sufficient information to finalize curriculum development for both the advanced group and the mid group. After numerous discussions with the evaluators on the findings, the PIU decided to take the following steps:

- Adjust the initial placement accordingly,
- Send an invitation to the participants after two days of the 2009 SI offering the option to switch level if desired,
- Reduce the number of the units from six to four,
- Confirm the selected textbook was suitable for the program, and
- Confirm that the proposed units of the textbook were acceptable to the participants.

As a side note, after the February 25 e-mail from the PIU in which the PIU requested the participants work on the two tasks, two participants who were initially placed in Mid Group dropped out of the program realizing that their Chinese language proficiency was not sufficient for the 2009 SI.

During the 2009 SI

In order to maximize benefit to the participants, it was decided to send an invitation e-mail to participants to change their level if they were uncomfortable with their current placement. Also, in order to obtain feedback from the participants and to be responsive to their needs, it was decided to conduct an online mid-term formative evaluation and an online

follow-up summative evaluation survey using GoogleDocs during and after the 2009 SI. The two questionnaires were designed by the evaluators, and then revised per feedback from the PIU.

Mid-term Evaluation

On the third day of the SI, an e-mail invitation was sent from the PIU to the participants to change their levels if they felt the placement was not suitable for them. Three participants were re-placed according to their requests, and they expressed satisfaction with their new placement.

The online mid-term evaluation was distributed to the participants on Friday of the first week of the 2009 SI. All participants were asked to respond to an anonymous online survey seeking feedback on topics in need of clarification, any support necessary to advance their individual work, their perception of the instructional pace, and their perception of the level in which they were placed (see Appendix D). The survey results were generated through GoogleDocs and analyzed by the evaluators the next day. The findings of the analysis were shared with the PIU on Sunday, so that the PIU could make immediate adjustments as needed.

Findings

For the mid-term survey, 14 participants participated in and finished the online mid-term survey. Overall, they were very satisfied with the topics, levels, textbook, and the instructors. They thought that the topics and the contents in the textbook were practical and authentic, and were satisfied with the level of the instruction as well as the feedback and expertise of the two instructors.

In the section soliciting feedback on strengths and weaknesses in topic, delivery, assignment, and the instructors, most participants showed great satisfaction on the authenticity of the topics covered, and the activities. Also, they expressed great appreciation for instructors' quick and useful feedback and their expertise in the Chinese language and in teaching it. A selection of participants' comments follow:

“AWESOME!!! The teachers are unbelievably great at responding to posts, answering questions, and providing useful and helpful feedback. They also excel in explaining not only their reasoning for making certain changes but also grammar points. I don't know how they're keeping up with it all!”

“The topics and genres are very practical. I think the chosen textbook is a good one. Strengths: I really like the opportunity to see other people's work and the feedback that they get.”

“I was expecting that the course would have a real time component so that all the participants could get to know each other and have some direct interaction. “

“Occasionally, the instructors' feedback is different than what the text informs. I think this is more due to the myriad ways Chinese can be expressed”

However, just as participants in 2001 expressed, they were challenged by the intensive pace, the amount of homework, the use of the course management system, and the inconsistencies between the instruction and the book. The following are some of their comments about their difficulties in the 2009 SI.

“A few times, the teachers have disagreed with the textbook but we only find that out after the fact.”

“Maybe more training with examples on how to use the technology for those of us who don't use it often would be nice!”

“.....there was too much work to do too fast. So that, once falling behind, it was hopeless to catch up.”

Use of the Findings

The findings were reported to and discussed with the PIU two days after the mid-term evaluation. However, practically speaking, there was not much change the PIU could make at that point. Based on the results of the mid-term survey, the PIU posted a message in the Café forum addressing the mid-term evaluation results, his response to the participants' comments and questions, and modifications he would make in week 2. For example, the PIU apologized

that it would not be possible to alter certain features of the courseware, and welcomed participants to lighten their own workload by skipping assignments if they felt too much pressure. The PIU also announced his intention to fulfill participants' request to prepare a "grammar digest" based on grammatical feedback given during the workshop.

Follow-up evaluation

The online follow-up evaluation survey was conducted to obtain feedback from the participants on specific topics such as the effectiveness of the program and recommendations for improvement in quality of the delivery, content, and organization of the Institute (see Appendix E). The questionnaire consisted of 5 sections with 32 Likert-scaled and open-ended questions. The online questionnaire was distributed to the participants on the last day of the 2009 SI, and the results were collected through the week following the 2009 SI. The results of the follow-up survey were analyzed by the evaluators, and then the findings as well as recommendations for future SIs were discussed with the PIU.

Findings

A total of 14 participants finished the survey questionnaire. The findings from the follow-up survey were consistent with the ones from the mid-term survey questionnaires. They showed satisfaction with the application process, contents, activities and assignments, and the learning outcomes.

In the first section asking the degree of participants' satisfaction with the application process and their placement, they showed satisfaction in all the categories. Their placement based on their writing samples was appropriate, and those of who had changed their levels found that the level change was beneficial. In the open-ended question, some participants mentioned that it would have been better if the SI and the STARTalk were publicized earlier. STARTALK represented a special additional opportunity to travel to Hawaii after the SI for

intensive hands-on teacher training in the STARTalk Sports and Language Immersion Camp at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Chinese language teachers who successfully completed the SI and who were accepted for admission to the STARTALK teacher training program (a separate enterprise) were eligible for a travel grant funded by the NFLRC and NRC-EA.

The second section addressed academic content. Overall, the participants thought that the academic content (the textbook, the online format, the level and the pace of the instruction) was practical, appropriate, and very helpful. In the open-ended question, most of them expressed that the textbook, topics, and assignments were practical and authentic. Also, they mentioned that the feedback and instruction from the instructors were insightful and useful. Some suggestions that were made for future SIs were about difficulties in catching up with postings in the discussion threads, mismatches between language feedback from the instructors versus the text, and shortness of time to finish assignments. Also, they wanted the number of assignments to be even in each lesson, pre-instruction to be offered before they started the assignments, and a summary of important points and common mistakes in each unit to be provided as well. Some comments from participants follow:

“Very practical and worthwhile! I was very happy with the content and hope the course will be offered again so I may continue at the next level.”

“The textbook had good units, but the amount of vocabulary and grammar per lesson was unbalanced (some had a lot, others had less). It would be nice if there were some general grammar or writing points that we could cover beyond just the new words for each unit.”

Section 3 asked about activities and assignments. All participants thought that the instructors’ feedback was very useful. Eight respondents thought the amount of assignments was appropriate, but four participants thought that it was too much. About the topics covered in the SI curriculum, they preferred topics that they could actually apply to their real life with

real information (e.g. the getting-to-know-you activities), and practical topics such as formal letter writing. Some comments and suggestions from the participants follow:

“I thought the topics covered were extremely useful. I hope that this course will be offered again next summer (although I know how time consuming it was for the instructors) so that I can continue on with the lessons that were not covered.”

“I enjoyed being asked to write about my personal experiences in a couple of the essays.”

“The ‘getting to know you’ exercise because it was more personal than the scenarios in the text.”

For the learning outcomes section, more than 13 participants thought they gained confidence in Chinese (writing) and in learning and teaching Chinese, and expressed their hope for having this type of chance to refresh their Chinese again in the future. Below are some comments from participants:

“I thought the teachers were excellent. They gave useful criticism in a timely fashion, and I found them very encouraging and supportive. I think perhaps they were overwhelmed by the volume of work, so next time around they might consider giving fewer assignments, which also would ease the workload on the students.”

“I thought this institute was extremely useful as is and hope others will be offered the same opportunity in the future....”

When asked for suggestions for future SIs, they recommended holding classes in other skills, such as speaking, and combining them with pedagogy. Most of them were happy about the 2009 SI, because there are not many opportunities for non native-speaking Chinese teachers to refresh their Chinese language.

“I would find all kinds of institutes useful! I feel we Chinese teachers have too little opportunity to learn and to share ideas with others. This institute effectively helped me to do both.”

“I would be happy to do more with writing, and also more with pedagogy. I started with a very low level of confidence in my writing abilities. This course helped me see ways to navigate through the most difficult part of Chinese, which for me has always been writing.....”

Use of Findings

Although some of the requests and suggestions made by the participants were difficult to implement because of limitations on budget, labor power, the period of the course, and technical aspects, the PIU found some of the suggestions very valuable for future

SIs. Based on participants' suggestions from both the mid-term and the follow-up surveys, he planned to make changes for future SIs. In response to their expressed needs regarding clearer and/or earlier notice about STARTalk and the NFLRC SI, it was decided that a modification would be made to the NFLRC web site to facilitate their information research, and that notices would be provided earlier. Regarding challenges posed by the intense pace of instruction, the PIU decided to reduce the amount of the assignments and the units to be covered. Also, based on participants' suggestions, he would provide pre-critiques of keys/examples which seem non-standard in the text. Also, the PIU will consider using Skype and providing listening files (in other words, recorded versions of written texts from the book) as optional scaffolding for learners in the future SI. The daily activity of commenting on one's own learning will be optional in any future SIs.

CONCLUSIONS

Most participants expressed increased confidence in writing Chinese, and appreciated the fact that the 2009 SI was offered to non native-speaking in-service teachers of a less commonly taught language. Some suggestions were made for future SIs, such as lessening the intensive pace, reducing the amount of homework, resolving inconsistencies between the instructor and the textbook, and improving interaction. These suggestions will be reflected in the design of future SIs. It is clear from participants' comments that the SI was considered worthwhile and useful. Now that the PIU has a clearer idea about participants' difficulties in the SI, common mistakes, and the weaknesses of the textbooks, etc., the PIU will be able to plan future SIs even more effectively. The participants strongly recommended that this type of institute should by all means be provided in the future, with some of the suggested adjustments.

APPENDIX A

Part I: Contact Information

1. Name:
2. Position:
3. Department:
4. Institution:
5. Language:
6. Levels taught: k12
7. Contact address:
8. Work phone:
9. Home phone:
10. Fax:
11. Email:

Part II: Background Information

12. Non-native speaker? (Yes or No)
13. How learned?
14. Level of Chinese language proficiency:
 - (1) OPI?
 - (2) ACTFL reading?
 - (3) ACTFL writing?
 - (4) ACTFL listening?
 - (5) ACTFL speaking?
15. # of students taught in a year:
16. Courses taught:
17. Computer used:
18. OS used
19. Input method:
20. Level of comfort with traditional Chinese characters (Chinese teacher only)?
21. Web-browsing difficulty?
22. Level of web experience?
23. Resources available in area?
24. Skill areas most in need of development?
25. Potential impact on future teaching?
26. Plans to pursue additional professional development?

Part III: Statement of Purpose

27. Part IV: STARTalk (Chinese instructors only)
28. Involvement in STARTalk?

SELECTION DECISION: Accept Reject Wait List

APPENDIX C

This email is being sent to members of the email alias list nflrc-si-09@hawaii.edu, which is used exclusively for communication with participants in the University of Hawaii NFLRC Summer Institute 2009 Online Workshop in Chinese. If you are not a member of this group, or do not wish to receive emails addressed to this group, please write to me at sfleming@hawaii.edu and let me know. I will remove you from the distribution list. :-)
Incidentally, earlier today Information Technology Services ended up having to send a lot of test messages to the list. Sorry about that. :-[

Action requested: send a reply on or before 3/4/2009 with your responses to the tasks, plus any comments you would like to add. PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO ALL. Reply only to sfleming@hawaii.edu.

Dear NFLRC Summer Institute 2009 Chinese online workshop participant:

It is with pleasure that I write to you in anticipation of our work together in June. I have completed the work of selecting participants in this Institute, and now I need to do three things:

1) Clarify the instructional objectives of the institute, and address the question of academic credit.

2) Ask for some extra information from you.

3) Propose a curriculum we will follow during our two week course, and solicit your input.

I have been working with two graduate students from the University of Hawaii's Department of Second Language Studies, who are acting as external consultants helping me with the process of needs analysis, curriculum development, and evaluation of this institute. Thank you very much, Ritsuko and HeeJin!

CLARIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES, ACADEMIC CREDIT

In the two-week online workshop that comprises the Chinese portion of this year's Summer Institute, our objective is to improve your writing skills (and, to a lesser extent, your reading skills and your vocabulary) in standard written (Mandarin) Chinese. Although this is an institute designed for teachers, we will not be addressing aspects of professional development such as second language acquisition theory, pedagogic methods, or training in online course development.

We regret that we are unable to offer academic credit for work in this summer's institute. But we will be happy to provide documentation of your participation, including a statement of equivalency vis-à-vis typical advanced language courses (this workshop will be equivalent to one academic credit). In addition, as you know, participants successfully completing the online workshop will be eligible for stipend support for attending the Hawaii StarTalk immersion sports camp, if accepted to the camp.

PROPOSED CURRICULUM

On the application form for this institute, we asked you to self-report your proficiency level

in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Mandarin Chinese. We received quite a range of responses, and we feel we would like to get some better data on written skills (“writing” in the sense of “composition,” not in the sense of “being able to write characters from recall”). You can provide this data by completing the two writing tasks at the end of this email, using your computer, and emailing them back to me (please do not “reply to all”). We suggest that you spend no more than 90 minutes on each task; if the task is too difficult to complete in that time, just send in whatever you have managed to write in that time.

Originally, I had planned to develop a curriculum based on pre-existing units in several of the Web-based advanced online courses we offer here at the University of Hawaii. As I reviewed your applications, however, I observed two trends that have made me rethink this idea, namely:

- 1) applications fell into two distinct groups which I am calling “mid” and “advanced”;
- 2) many applicants expressed the desire to further develop their writing skills in Chinese.

The appearance of these two trends gave me the idea of developing a new curriculum for this two-week intensive course -- a curriculum based around the book *Developing Writing Skills in Chinese* by Boping Yuan and Kan Qian, published in 2003 by Routledge (<http://www.routledgelanguages.com>). You can search on the exact title of the book at the website to find it. The book is in simplified characters only.

I propose that we form two groups within the web-based course, a “mid” group and an “advanced” group, and work respectively through two clusters of units from the book, doing the tasks in the book and publishing the results in forums in the course for feedback from peers and from the instructor. We will be more like a study group than a teacher-directed class. Of necessity, in order to accommodate the entire group, the “spread” of the curriculum is limited. A few of the candidates for this Institute may be simply too advanced in proficiency for the type of training we are targeting. Our primary goal is to help instructors reach and sustain the Advanced level; for those who are already Advanced, this Institute may provide more in the way of practice than new acquisition. Nevertheless, we encourage your participation.

I realize that many of you wish to develop your skills in 写字 moxie, i.e., writing characters from recall; unfortunately, in the web-based environment there is really no way to exercise this skill unless you're using a handwriting recognition pad. The usual method used to write on the computer is an input method editor (IME) employing Hanyu Pinyin.

I also recognize that many of you are interested in developing listening or speaking skills. For various reasons we have decided against including those skills in the online curriculum this summer. The Web-based medium is particularly suited to cultivating skills in the written channel, and we would like to exploit this strength.

Most of you are probably not familiar with the book I am proposing; just in case you are, however, allow me to outline the chapters I am proposing to work through:

Mid Group

Unit Two: Notes

Unit Three: Personal letters
Unit Four: Announcements, small ads and others
Unit Five: Formal letters
Unit Six: Reporting speech
(material may be added or deleted)

Advanced Group

Unit Seven: Exemplification, reformulation and summary
Unit Eight: Comparison and contrast, simile and metaphor
Unit Nine: Procedure, process and development
Unit Eleven: Descriptions of people's emotional attributes
Unit Twelve: Descriptions of people's disposition and moral attributes
(material may be added or deleted)

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Tschudi

p.s. Here are your writing tasks. Remember, please limit yourself to 90 minutes on each (and you may end up using less time):

TASK 1

Someone has given you the email address of a friend of yours in China whom you have not seen for a long time. You would like to re-establish contact with this person, letting her know how things have been with you and asking for her news. You would like to give her your news, but on the other hand, you're not sure she will write back, so don't make your email too long. Open and close your email with appropriate salutations and polite formulas.

TASK 2

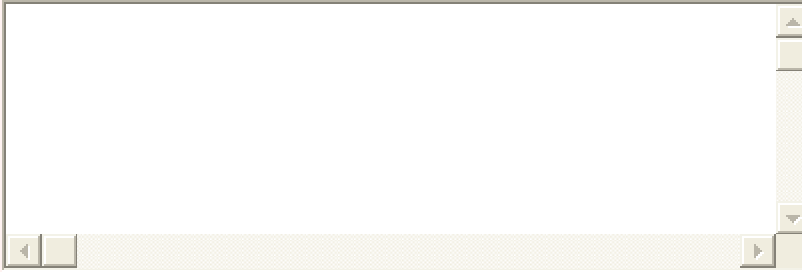
You work at a Chinese company in Shanghai as an in-house consultant on international trade and investment. Your boss speaks only the most rudimentary English, and prefers that you communicate with her in Chinese. Recently, this boss has heard of a business opportunity that happens to be in your home town in the USA, a place about which she knows next to nothing. She has assigned you to write a short report outlining the general features of your home town: general data such as one might find in a Chamber of Commerce Web site, data that would be of interest to an outside investor. You do not need to provide detailed business analysis, but if you can provide some socioeconomic data, that would be nice. But general data about the terrain, climate, and local culture is also appropriate. Consider this a draft – you do not need to package it as a formal report.

APPENDIX D

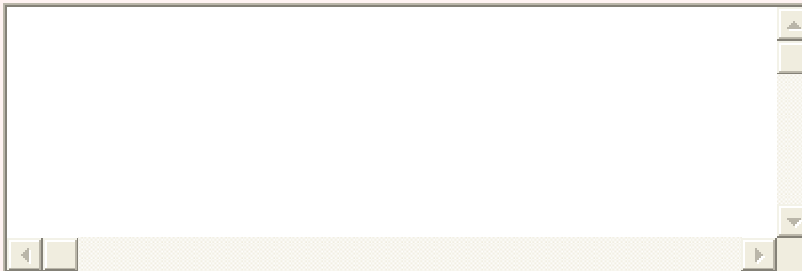
Welcome to the 2009 NFLRC Online Summer Institute for Non-native Teachers of Chinese Mid-term Evaluation Questionnaire.

This survey seeks quick feedback from you on the Summer Institute online program. Please take a few minutes to complete the four questions below. Your answers will help us to help you get maximally useful outcomes from this program.

1. You have participated in the Institute for five days now. Briefly describe any topics, any assignments, or any matters related to the instruction that you are receiving that you feel puzzled or uncertain about at this point.



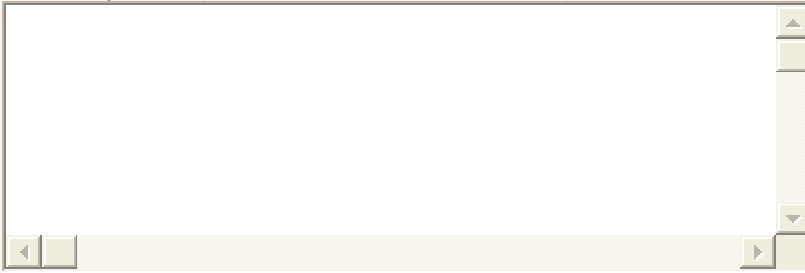
2. Please describe any difficulties you have encountered with anything related to the design or use of the web site.



3. Briefly describe strengths and weakness of this institute so far as related to the following four topic areas
1) content (topics and genres)



2) delivery (level, pace of instruction, textbook, etc)

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3) activities and assignments

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with small square buttons at their ends.

4) instructors (expertise, helpfulness, responsiveness, timeliness, etc)

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with small square buttons at their ends.

4. There are five days remaining in the institute. How can we help you the most in accomplishing your goals over those five days? Please provide one suggestion that is your highest priority.

A large, empty rectangular text box with a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with small square buttons at their ends.

Submit

APPENDIX E

Welcome to the 2009 NFLRC Online Summer Institute for Non-native Teachers of Chinese Follow-up Questionnaire.

We would like to get some feedback from you on the Summer Institute. Please take a few minutes to tell us about: (a) your opinions on the application process, web-based information, placement, etc. (b) your impressions of the academic content of the Summer Institute and its delivery; (c) your satisfaction with the activities and assignments; (d) the extent to which this program has helped increase your writing skills; (e) any suggestions on ways to improve the program.

The five sections on the questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous. Your answers will help us plan for future events to support non-native Chinese language teachers.

Section 1. Application process, placement

1. Please consider the application process (i.e., timing, communication with the administrator, and web-based information, etc). To what extent were you satisfied with the application process?

	1	2	3	4	
not satisfied					very satisfied

2. Please consider the writing task we asked you to perform to assist us during placement before the institute began. To what extent did you think that your placement based on the writing task was appropriate?

	1	2	3	4	
not appropriate					very appropriate

3. For those who requested the level change, to what extent did you think that the level change was beneficial for your learning?

	1	2	3	4	
not beneficial					very beneficial

4. What suggestions would you make for improving the application process?

Section 2. Academic content and delivery 5. Please consider the academic content (i.e., topics and genres). What were the strengths of the academic content of the Summer Institute?

6. What suggestions would you make for improving the academic content?

7. Please consider the delivery of the content. Was the online format effective for increasing your writing skill?

	1	2	3	4	
not effective					vert effective

8. Was the pace of the instruction effective for increasing your writing skill?

	1	2	3	4	
--	---	---	---	---	--

not effective					very effective
---------------	--	--	--	--	----------------

9. Was the level of the instruction effective for increasing your writing skill?

1 2 3 4

not effective					very effective
---------------	--	--	--	--	----------------

10. Was the text book effective for increasing your writing skill?

1 2 3 4

not effective					very effective
---------------	--	--	--	--	----------------

11. What suggestions would you make for improving the delivery of the content?

12. Please consider your impression of the instructors (i.e., expertise, helpfulness, responsiveness, timeline, etc.). What were the strengths of the instructors?

14. Please rate the overall usefulness of the academic portion of the institute. Overall, the academic portion of the institute was...

1 2 3 4

not useful					very useful
------------	--	--	--	--	-------------

13. What suggestions would you make for the instructors?

Section 3. Activities and Assignments 15. Please describe one activity or assignment you particularly

liked.

16. Please describe one activity or assignment that you particularly disliked, and provide suggestions for

improving it.

17. Please consider the activities and assignments. What activities or assignments were particularly

useful?

18. Please rate the usefulness of the feedback on your assignments.

1 2 3 4

not useful					very useful
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19. Please rate the usefulness of the feedback on your activities(i.e.cafe, forum)

1 2 3 4

not useful					very useful
------------	--	--	--	--	-------------

20. Was the amount of the assignments appropriate?

- too little
- appropriate
- too much

Section 3. Learning outcomes 21. To what extent did the Institute help you to write with more confidence in Chinese?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

22. To what extent did the Institute help you to gain confidence that you can continue developing your writing skills in Chinese?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

23. To what extent did the Institute help you to gain skills useful for your teaching?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

29. To what extent did the Institute help you to gain skills for writing different genres and styles in Chinese?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

24. To what extent did the Institute help you to gain confidence that you can teach advanced levels?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

30. To what extent did the Institute help you to get to know your weaknesses and strengths in Chinese writing?

	1	2	3	4	
not at all					a lot

31. Please comment on any other achievements that you made or would like to have make.

▲

▼

◀

▶

Section 5. Additional Suggestions 32. Please provide any suggestions or comments for future institutes that would help non-native teachers improve their Chinese writing.

33. What other kinds of institutes would you find useful for improving your Chinese language teaching (i.e., pedagogy, speaking, listening, reading etc.)?

Submit

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Welcome to the 2009 NFLRC Online Summer Institute for Non-native Chinese Teachers Follow-up Questionnaire.

We would like to get some feedback from you on the institute. Please take a few minutes to tell us about: (a) your impressions of the academic content of the Summer Institute and its delivery; (b) your satisfaction with the activities and assignments; (c) the extent to which this program has helped increase your writing skills; (d) any suggestions on ways to improve the program.

This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous. There are four sections in total. Your answers will help us plan for future events to support non-native Chinese language teachers.

Section 1 Academic content and delivery

1. Please consider the academic content (i.e., topics and genres). What were the strengths of the academic content of the Summer Institute?

2. What suggestions would you make for improving the academic content?

3. Please consider the delivery of the content. (i.e., online format, pace/level of instruction, and textbook). What were the strengths of the delivery of content?

4. What suggestions would you make for improving the delivery of content?

5. Please consider your impression of the instructors. (i.e., expertise, helpfulness, responsiveness, timeline, etc.) What were the strengths of the instructors?

6. What suggestions would you make for the instructors?

7. Please rate the overall usefulness of the academic portion of the institute.

Overall, the academic portion of the institute was...

☒ Not useful ☐ a little useful ☐ somewhat useful ☐ very useful

Section 2 Activities and Assignment

8. Please consider the writing task we asked you to perform to assist us during placement before the institute began. To what extent did you think that the placement based on the writing task was appropriate?

① Not useful ☐ a little useful ☐ somewhat useful ☐ very useful

9. Please consider the activities and assignments. What activities or assignments were particularly useful?

10. What suggestions would you make for improving activities and assignments?

11. Please rate the usefulness of the institute.

② Not useful ☐ a little useful ☐ somewhat useful ☐ very useful

12. Please rate the usefulness of the feedback on your tasks.

① Not useful ☐ a little useful ☐ somewhat useful ☐ very useful

13. Please rate the amount of the assignments.

☐ Too little ☐ appropriate ☐ too much

Section 3 learning outcomes

14. To what extent did the Institute help you to...

A. ...write with more confidence in Chinese?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

B. ...gain skills useful for your teaching?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

C. ...gain confidence that you can continue developing your writing skills in Chinese?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

D. ...gain confidence that you can teach advanced levels?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

E. ...gain skills for writing different genres and styles in Chinese?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

F. ...get to know your weaknesses and strengths in Chinese writing?

① Not at all ☐ a little ☐ somewhat ☐ a lot

E. Please comment on any other achievements that you made.

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Section 4. Outreach

15. Please provide any suggestions or comments for future institutes that would help non-native teachers improve their Chinese writing.

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